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ABSTRACT

This overview presents a profile of the Hispanic American community in five key areas: demographics, education, poverty, health, and civil rights. The demographic overview considers population composition and location, population growth, language acquisition, family status, and employment. Educational status and trends, underrepresentation in education and training programs, factors affecting Hispanic undereducation, and signs of progress are discussed. Employment, earnings, and income; children and families; and factors associated with increasing poverty for Hispanics are considered. Hispanic health status, access to health care, and factors limiting access to health care are discussed. A section on civil rights treats public attitudes, evidence of discrimination, and Federal enforcement activities. A final section presents policy implications. The following findings are highlighted: (1) Hispanics constitute the first and most recent immigrants to the United States and the population continues to grow rapidly; (2) Hispanics have many of the values identified as typically "American"; (3) Hispanics have the lowest level of educational achievement of any major population group; (4) employed Hispanics are far more likely than other Americans to be among the working poor; (5) Hispanics are more likely than other Americans to contract certain diseases, yet less likely to have access to regular health care; and (6) Hispanics suffer from substantial levels of discrimination in education, employment, and housing, yet receive minimal attention from Federal civil rights enforcement agencies. Included are extensive end notes. (JB)

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State of Hispanic America 1991:

An Overview

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA (NCLR)

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest constituency-based national Hispanic organization, exists to improve life opportunities for the more than 22 million Americans of Hispanic descent. In addition to its Washington, D.C. headquarters, NCLR maintains field offices in Los Angeles, California; Phoenix, Arizona; McAllen, Texas; and Chicago, Illinois. NCLR has four missions: applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy on behalf of the entire Hispanic community; capacity-building assistance to support and strengthen Hispanic community-based organizations; public information activities designed to provide accurate information and positive images of Hispanics; and special innovative, catalytic, and international projects. NCLR acts as an umbrella for more than 140 affiliated Hispanic community-based organizations which together serve 36 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, and reach more than two million Hispanics annually.

NCLR
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

State of Hispanic America 1991:

An Overview

Raúl Yzaguirre
President

810 First Street, N.E.
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002
Telephone: (202) 289-1380
Fax: (202) 289-8173

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The contributors to this report are: Demographics--Emily Gantz McKay, Vice President for Institutional Development; Education--Denise De La Rosa, Senior Education Policy Analyst; Poverty--Sonia Perez, Senior Poverty Policy Analyst; Health--Cristina Lopez, Director, Health and Elderly Services; and Civil Rights--Claire Gonzales, Senior Civil Rights Policy Analyst. Emily McKay also supervised the editing and preparation of this report.

Charles Kamasaki, Vice President for Research, Advocacy and Legislation, and Lisa Navarrete, Director of Public Information, also assisted in the preparation of the report. The contributors would like to acknowledge Rosemary Aguilar Francis, Desktop Publishing Specialist, and Yolanda Bernal, Information Specialist, for their invaluable help.

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FOREWORD

In 1492, one group of our ancestors came to this continent. They were met by another set of ancestors. Over time a new people emerged that we now call *Hispanics* or *Latinos*. Nearly 500 years later, many Americans are learning for the first time that Hispanics will soon become this nation's largest minority.

The sudden increase in Latino visibility in the United States, however, has not been an altogether positive experience. We have learned from major public opinion polls that many of our fellow Americans perceive Latinos to be lazy, unpatriotic and mostly recent immigrants. It is ironic that a community with proportionately more Congressional Medal of Honor winners than any other ethnic group is considered unpatriotic; that a group with the highest male labor force participation rate is seen as lazy; that a people whose roots in this country pre-date Columbus are viewed as newcomers.

Many Americans are also confused about the kinds of public policies needed to address the socioeconomic needs of Hispanics. Some associated with the political left believe that, as an economically disadvantaged ethnic group, Hispanics support every conceivable social program that purports to serve minorities or the poor. Others identified with the political right assert that poverty and discrimination among Hispanics are an illusion and thus require no policy attention at all. Both views are extreme, and neither is accurate.

It is true that, by virtually any measurable economic standard, Hispanics are indeed severely disadvantaged. But it is also true that -- even in the absence of public support -- the Hispanic community's work ethic, strong family values, and entrepreneurial spirit often overcome the underlying problems associated with poverty. Rather than justifying governmental indifference, our community's values and characteristics demonstrate that Hispanics are a "good bet" for public policy investments.

The failure of many of such programs to equitably serve our community means that our support for the liberal social agenda cannot be taken for granted. In fact, national Hispanic organizations would be derelict in our responsibility to our community if we failed to carefully examine market-oriented anti-poverty policy options as possible alternatives to social programs which may exclude or inhibit Hispanic participation. We would be equally unwise to assume that equity for Hispanics will be achieved in the absence of governmental resources, leadership, and commitment.

Hispanics also accept our own responsibility to initiate and expand self-help efforts to combat poverty and discrimination. We view with great concern the rising rates of teenage pregnancy and substance abuse in our community. At a time when some alarmists question Hispanics' lack of "assimilation" into the mainstream, we are presented with undeniable evidence that too many in our community are abandoning their traditional values and engaging in unconstructive social behaviors. In this sense, our community and our country would be better served by leadership that encourages the retention of the Hispanic community's traditional strong family values.

Hispanic organizations bear a special responsibility for providing such leadership. The African American civil rights movement has benefitted immeasurably from leadership developed and nurtured through community-controlled churches and Black colleges. No similar institutions exist in the Hispanic community. National and local Hispanic organizations thus play a critical role as the primary community-controlled Hispanic institutions.

Our community's growth imposes an additional obligation on national Hispanic organizations like the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) -- the need to broaden our public policy agenda. While we cannot and will not abandon our traditional commitment to a "rights agenda," we understand that our community cannot afford to be silent on the major issues of the day, from tax and trade policy to health care and education reform. Policies addressing these issues will help determine the kind of society in which our children will live and work.

With this report, NCLR hopes to begin setting the record straight about who Hispanics are and what they are not, and about the challenges that Hispanics and other Americans face today and into the future. *The State of Hispanic America* is a brief "snapshot" of the Hispanic community in five key areas: demographics, education, poverty, health, and civil rights. We intend this summary report to be the beginning of an annual series that will educate the American public about the conditions faced by Hispanic Americans.

We remain optimistic that, once armed with the facts, policy makers and the public will see for themselves that it is in everyone's interest to join in our struggle for Hispanic American equality.

Raúl Yzaguirre, President
National Council of La Raza
February 1992

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hispanic community in the United States is a study in contrasts. As this brief overview of the State of Hispanic America explains:

- **Hispanics constitute both the first and the most recent immigrants to what is now the United States -- and the population continues to grow rapidly.** The Spanish settled North America long before the English, and many Hispanics are descended from individuals who became U.S. citizens by conquest during the mid-1800s, when the northern half of what was then Mexico became a part of the United States. The large majority of Hispanics in this country are native-born. During the 1980s, the Hispanic population grew by 53% -- eight times as fast as the non-Hispanic population -- half through natural increase and half through immigration.

- **Hispanics possess many of the values identified as typically "American" -- great loyalty to family, religious faith, a strong work ethic, and an enduring patriotism -- yet are viewed negatively in public opinion polls and stereotyped in the media.** For example, Mexican Americans have the highest proportion of Congressional Medal of Honor winners of any identifiable ethnic group, yet a 1990 study by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) found that Hispanics were rated last among six American cultural groups on patriotism. Hispanics were viewed as lazy, yet Hispanic men are more likely than Whites or Blacks to be working or looking for work.

- **Hispanics have the lowest levels of educational attainment of any major population group, but are underrepresented in pre-school programs and other education programs designed to help at-risk students.** Only about half of Hispanic adults are high school graduates, compared to nearly two-thirds of Blacks and four-fifths of Whites. Less than one in 10 Hispanics has completed college, compared to more than one in nine Blacks and one in five Whites. Pre-school programs are widely viewed as a means of increasing educational success, yet only about three in 10 Hispanic 3-4 year-olds are enrolled in pre-school, compared to four in 10 Black children and nearly five in 10 White children. Hispanics are underrepresented in many federal education and employment programs, from TRIO programs for disadvantaged youth to Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs for youth dropouts.

- **Hispanic males have the highest labor force participation rate of any major population group, yet employed Hispanics are far more likely than other Americans to be among the working poor.** Last year, 78.2% of Hispanic men 16 and older were either working or looking for work, compared to 73.9% of non-Hispanic men. Even with a parent working full-time, year-round, Hispanic children in the U.S. are three times more likely to be poor than children in comparable non-Hispanic families. More than three in five poor Hispanic families have at least one working member.

- **Hispanics are more likely than other Americans to contract certain diseases, yet less likely to have access to regular health care.** Hispanics suffer from excess incidence of diabetes, tuberculosis, certain cancers, and AIDS, yet they are less likely than other Americans to report a regular source of medical care. Hispanics are far more likely than Blacks or Whites to be uninsured, largely because they work in

industries and occupations which are least likely to provide health benefits. Nearly one-third (32%) of Hispanics have no health insurance, compared to 20% of Blacks and 13% of Whites.

- **Hispanics suffer from substantial levels of discrimination in education, employment, and housing, yet receive minimal attention from federal civil rights enforcement agencies.** Recent studies show that Hispanics are now more segregated than Blacks in inner-city schools; the General Accounting Office (GAO) has reported very high rates of employment discrimination associated with the employer sanctions provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA); and a recent study issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that Hispanic homeseekers, both buyers and renters, experienced discriminatory treatment in at least 50% of their encounters with sale and rental agents. Yet the federal agencies responsible for protecting Hispanic civil rights -- the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and HUD -- continue to give low priority to Hispanics in outreach, education, and handling of complaints.

Reducing the economic disparity and the gaps in opportunity between Hispanics and the rest of U.S. society is not simply a moral preference -- it is a social and economic imperative. Over the next decade, the youthful Hispanic population will constitute about one-third of labor force growth, and a growing proportion of the taxpayers supporting the transfer payments such as Social Security which are needed by an aging society. Moreover, if the United States is to compete in the world economy of the 21st century, it must have a highly educated and well trained workforce, capable of carrying out complex tasks and learning new skills to keep up with rapid technological changes.

Narrowing the economic gap between Hispanics and other Americans will require immediate, sustained policy intervention and substantial public investment. Because current programs do not necessarily take into account the special characteristics and needs of Hispanics or serve them equitably, a new focus on assuring non-discrimination and equity is also required. Progress towards full participation in U.S. society will also require considerable self-help efforts by the Hispanic community. The challenge for the 1990s is to find new ways to address old problems, and to enlist the support of both the Hispanic community and the broader American society to work towards true equality of opportunity for Hispanic Americans.

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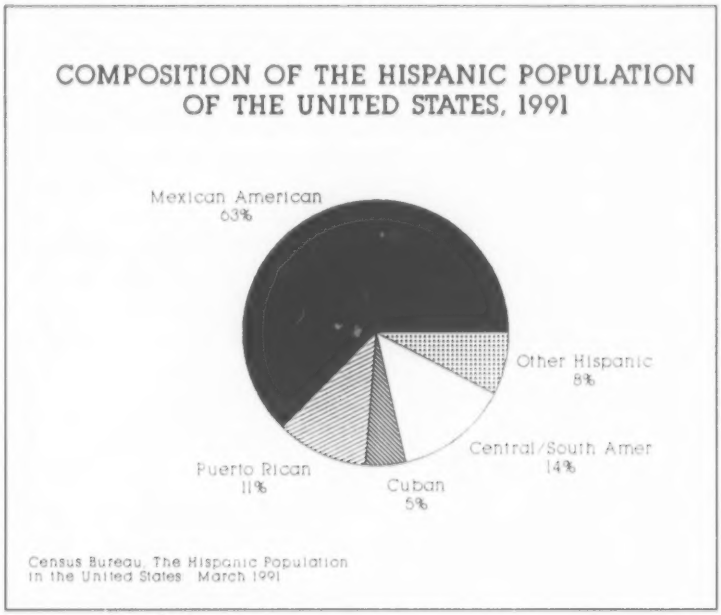
DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Introduction

Hispanic Americans constitute the second largest minority group in the United States, with a mainland population of 22.35 million as of the 1990 Census; about one in 11 Americans is Hispanic (9.0%).* Hispanics constitute approximately 36% of the U.S. minority population. Hispanics are among the fastest-growing and most diverse population groups in the U.S., and also the youngest. Their demographic status reflects strong family values, a strong work ethic, and serious socioeconomic problems.

Population Composition and Location

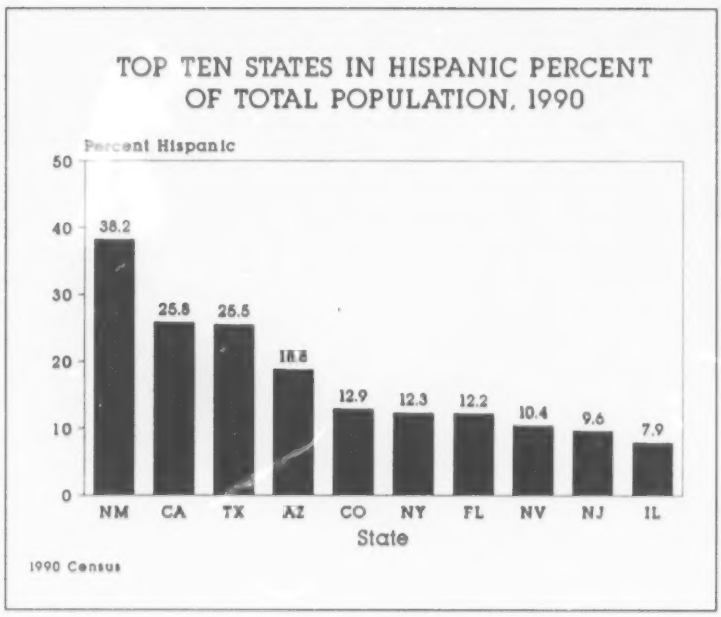
The Hispanic population includes many different nationality groups. As the pie chart indicates, the majority -- 62.6% -- of Hispanics self-identify as Mexican Americans; 11.1% are Puerto Rican, 4.9% Cuban, 13.8% Central and South American, and 7.6% other Hispanic.[1]


COMPOSITION OF THE HISPANIC POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1991
Mexican American 63%
Other Hispanic 8%
Central/South Amer 14%
Puerto Rican 11%
Cuban 5%
Census Bureau, The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1991

Hispanics live in every part of the United States, but are heavily concentrated in a few states. The 1990 Census reported that more than half of all Hispanics live in California (34%) and Texas (19%); about 85% live in these two states plus New York (10%), Florida (7%). Illinois (4%), New Jersey (3%), Arizona (3%), New Mexico (3%), and Colorado (2%). Regionally, 45% of Hispanics live in the West, compared to just 21% of the total U.S. population; 30% live in the South (a region which includes Texas), compared to 34% of the general population; just 8% live in the Midwest, compared to 24% of the general population; and 17% live in the Northeast, compared to 20% of the general population.[2] Hispanics constitute more than a quarter of the population of three states -- New Mexico, California, and Texas -- and more than 7% of the population of 10 states, as shown in the chart below.

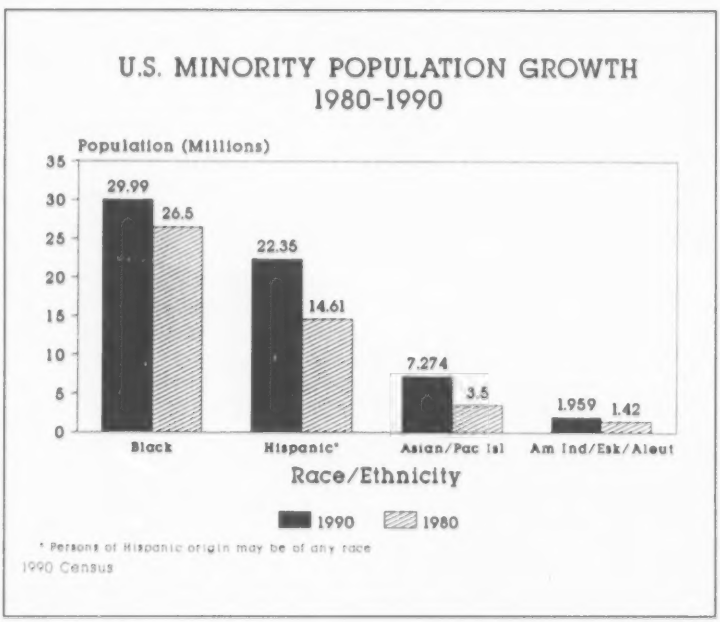
* The term "Hispanic" is used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census to identify Americans of Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, and Spanish descent. Throughout this report, it is used interchangeably with "Latino."

The great majority of Hispanics live in urban areas; as of March 1991, 91.8% of Hispanics, compared to 72.8% of non-Hispanics, were urban residents. There are sizeable subgroup differences; in 1991, 90.5% of Mexican Americans lived in urban areas, compared to 95.2% of Puerto Ricans, 95.7% of Cubans, and 97.0% of Central and South Americans.[3]



Population Growth

The Hispanic population grew 53% between 1980 and 1990 -- five times as fast as the total population and eight times as fast as the non-Hispanic population.[4] In 1986, the Census Bureau published a series of projections of Hispanic population growth; the Hispanic population as of 1990 exceeded the "highest series" estimates by the Census Bureau.[5] At the current rate of growth, Hispanics will become the largest ethnic minority in the U.S. around the turn of the century. These population estimates exclude the Island of Puerto Rico, with a population of about 3.5 million. As the figure shows, only the Asian/Pacific Islander population grew more rapidly than the Hispanic population between 1980 and 1990, more than doubling during the decade, largely due to immigration.



Half the Hispanic population growth re-

sults from natural increase, and the other half from immigration, and the majority of Hispanics are native-born. Hispanics constitute both the first and the most recent immigrants to the United States. Some Hispanics are descended from Mexicans who became citizens by conquest in the mid-1800s, when the northern half of what was then Mexico became a part of the United States; many Hispanics have arrived in the U.S. during the past decade, primarily from Mexico and Central America. While 1990 Census data on nativity are not yet available, and 1980 data have limitations, it appears that as of 1980, about 59% of Hispanics were mainland-born, and another 8% were citizens by birth but born in Puerto Rico, for a total of 67% native-born.[6] The percentage of Hispanics who are U.S. citizens is of course higher, since the native-born figure excludes naturalized citizens.

Hispanics are younger than other Americans, with a median age of 26.2 as of 1991, compared to 33.8 for non-Hispanics. There are major subgroup differences; Mexican-origin Hispanics are the youngest Hispanic nationality group, with a median age of 24.3 years, compared to 26.7 for Puerto Ricans, 27.9 for Central and South Americans, and 39.3 for Cubans. A major reason for rapid Hispanic population growth is the fact that the Hispanic population is younger than the non-Hispanic population; just 19.0% of Hispanics are 45 or older, compared to 32.1% of non-Hispanics.[7] While Hispanic elderly are the fastest growing segment of the elderly population, as of 1991, just 5.1% of Hispanics were 65 or older, compared to 12.8% of non-Hispanics. Cubans had by far the highest proportion of elderly, at 14.7%; 4.7% of Puerto Ricans, 4.4% of Mexican Americans, and 3.0% of Central and South Americans were over 65.[8]

The fertility rate for Hispanics is higher than for other major U.S. populations. Fertility rates for the overall U.S. population in June 1990 showed a birthrate of 67.0 per 1,000 American women aged 15-44; the rate was 65.2 for White women, 78.4 for Black women, 58.1 for Asian/Pacific Islander women, and 93.2 for Hispanic women. Among Hispanics who had babies in the year preceding June 1991, 23.2% were unmarried, almost the same rate as for non-Hispanic women (23.3%). The unmarried birth rate was 17.2% for White women, 56.7% for Black women, and 8.9% for Asian/Pacific Islander women. The fertility rate for Hispanic women in the labor force was 67.6, compared to 132.3 for Hispanic women not in the labor force. This is consistent with the pattern for White and Black women. The fertility rate for White women in the labor force was 48.9, compared to 108.5 for those not in the labor force. For Black women, the fertility rate was 55.7 for those in the labor force, and 122.3 for those not in the labor force. Data on the number of children ever born per 1,000 women show that Hispanic women in professional and managerial jobs have fewer children than those in lower-paid occupations, as is the case with Black and White women. Hispanic women from higher-income families are more likely than other Hispanic women to be childless, as is the case with White women, but while fertility rates among White women decrease with increasing family income, fertility rates for Hispanic women do not show consistent trends by income.[9]

Language Acquisition

National studies and scholarly analyses of language acquisition among Hispanics suggest that the majority of Hispanic immigrants rapidly begin to learn and use English. Nearly three-fourths of Hispanics either are native-born Americans or have been in the U.S. for at least 15 years. According to the Veltman Report, which analyzes data from a number of

studies including the 1976 *Survey of Income and Education* and the 1980 Census, 70% of immigrants appear to abandon the exclusive use of Spanish within a 10-year period, and 75% of Hispanic immigrants are speaking English on a regular daily basis by the time they have been in the U.S. for 15 years. It appears that most of the shift to English occurs during the first 15 years of U.S. residence.[10]

Hispanics from immigrant families typically lose their Spanish fluency over several generations, following the same pattern as most other immigrant groups. Immigrants typically continue to speak Spanish throughout their lives, although those who arrive in the U.S. young -- especially before the age of 14 -- often use English as their usual everyday language outside the home. The children of Hispanic immigrants usually speak Spanish as a second language; the grandchildren of immigrants have English as their mother tongue and often do not speak Spanish regularly, if at all.[11]

Family Status

Hispanics -- including Hispanic elderly -- are more likely than non-Hispanics to live in households with other family members. In 1991, more than eight in 10 Hispanic households (82%) were family households, compared to seven in 10 non-Hispanic households (70%).[12] In 1989, more than three-fourths (76.6%) of Hispanic elderly lived with family, compared with two-thirds (67.5%) of White elderly and more than three-fifths (63.1%) of Black elderly.[13] Hispanics are also more likely than non-Hispanics to live in three-generation households where the grandparent is not the householder; in 1989, 60.2% of Hispanic elderly were householders, compared to 68.1% of Black and 70.7% of White elderly.[14] Hispanic elderly are less likely to live alone, and less likely to live in nursing homes.

Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanics to live in female-headed households. As of 1991, 23.8% of Hispanic families were maintained by a female householder, with no husband present, compared to 16.4% of non-Hispanic households. The percentage of female-headed households ranges from a low of 19.1% among Mexican Americans and 19.4% among Cubans to 26.1% for Central and South Americans and 43.3% for Puerto Ricans.[15] The rate for Puerto Ricans is similar to that for Blacks; 1991 figures are not yet available, but in 1990, 43.8% of Black families were female-headed, as were 12.9% of White families and 23.1% of Hispanic families.[16]

Hispanic families tend to be larger than non-Hispanic families. In 1991, Hispanic families had a mean of 3.80 persons, compared to 3.13 for non-Hispanic families. About 29% of Hispanic families had five or more members, compared with about 13% of non-Hispanic families. Among subgroups, Mexican Americans had the largest families on average (4.06 persons), compared to 3.81 for Central and South Americans, 3.37 for Puerto Ricans, and 2.81 for Cubans.[17]

Employment

Hispanic men have the highest labor force participation rate among male population groups; Hispanic women have the lowest among female groups. As of 1991, 78.2% of

Hispanic men 16 and older were either working or seeking work, compared to 73.9% of non-Hispanic men. The rate was highest for Central and South American males, at 84.2%; 79.6% of Mexican American males, 73.3% of Cuban males, and 66.4% of Puerto Rican males were in the labor force. Only about half (51.4%) of Hispanic women were in the labor force in 1991, compared to 57.4% of non-Hispanic women. Labor force participation rates are increasing, however; in 1983, 47% of Hispanic women were in the labor force.[18]

Both Hispanic males and females are most often employed in relatively low-paying jobs. In 1991, just 11.4% of Hispanic males, compared to 27.6% of non-Hispanic males, were employed in managerial and professional jobs, while 29.1% of Hispanic men, compared to 19.1% of non-Hispanic men, worked as operators, fabricators, and laborers. Another 17.1% of Hispanic males worked in service occupations, compared to 9.8% of non-Hispanic males. Similarly, 15.8% of Hispanic women, compared with 28.0% of non-Hispanic women, were working in managerial and professional jobs in 1991; 26.2% of Hispanic women compared to 17.0% of non-Hispanic women held service jobs; and 14.0% of Hispanic women compared to 7.6% of non-Hispanic women held jobs as operators, fabricators, and laborers.[19]

Hispanic workers have earnings far below those of non-Hispanics. The median annual earnings of working Hispanic women in 1990 were $10,099, compared to $12,436 for non-Hispanic women. Among subgroups, Mexican American women earned the least, $9,286. Among men, Hispanic workers earned a median of $14,141, compared to $22,207 for non-Hispanic men. Among subgroups, Mexican American men had the lowest median earnings at $12,894.[20]

Hispanics have lower per capita incomes than either Blacks or Whites. In 1989, per capita income was $14,896 for Whites, $8,747 for Blacks, and $8,390 for Hispanics.[21] In 1989, Hispanic per capita income was thus 56.3% that of Whites.

The income gap between Hispanics and Whites is not narrowing. Data from the 1990 Current Population Survey indicate that in 1989, White median family income was $35,975, Hispanic family income $23,446, and Black family income $20,209. In 1989, Hispanic median family income was 65.2% of White family income, down from 65.3% in 1985, 67.2% in 1980, 66.9% in 1975, and 69.2% in 1973, all in constant dollars.[22]

Hispanics are far less likely than other Americans to be homeowners. In 1991, just 39.0% of Hispanics were homeowners, compared to 65.8% of non-Hispanics. Home ownership rates were especially low among Central and South Americans, at just 22.2%, and Puerto Ricans, at 23.4%; 43.5% of Mexican Americans and 47.3% of Cubans were homeowners.[23]

Conclusion

The Hispanic population is young, diverse, and rapidly growing. While the Hispanic population is concentrated in certain states, these states are located in every region of the country. Heavily urbanized, Hispanics constitute a significant minority or majority in a growing number of central cities throughout the country. Their youth, rapid growth, strong work ethic, and -- among women -- increasing labor market participation assure that they will become a growing component of the nation's overall population, labor force, and school population in the decade to come. Later sections of this report provide more detailed information on Hispanic demographics related to education, health, poverty, and civil rights.

Endnotes

1. Bureau of the Census, *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1991,* Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 455. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.
2. 1990 Census data, contained in tables released March 12, 1991, from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.
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6. Calculated from data in Veltman, Calvin, *The Future of the Spanish Language in the United States.* New York City and Washington, D.C.: Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1988. Known as the "Veltman Report."
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9. Bureau of the Census, *Fertility of American Women: June 1990,* Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 454. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.
10. Veltman Report, *op. cit.*
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13. Bureau of the Census, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1989,* Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 445. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1990.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1991, op. cit.*
16. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports,* P-20, No. 447. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.
17. *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1991, op. cit.*
18. *Ibid*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Table No. 742, from Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 168, in Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.
22. Calculated from Table 730, *Ibid.*
23. *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1991, op. cit.*

EDUCATION

Introduction

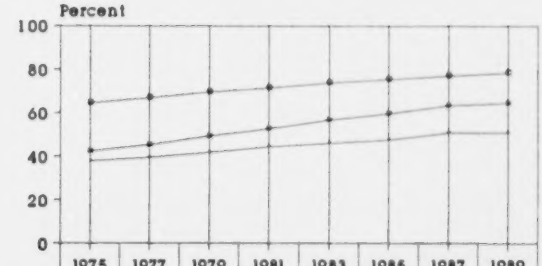
Hispanics remain the most undereducated major segment of the U.S. population. While educational attainment levels have improved somewhat, Hispanics continue to enter school later, leave school earlier, and receive proportionately fewer high school diplomas and college degrees than other Americans. While many federally funded or mandated education programs are designed to help narrow the education gap between minority and other Americans, Hispanics often receive limited services through such programs.

Educational Status and Trends

Hispanic educational attainment levels have increased in absolute terms since the 1970s, but the gap between Hispanics and non-Hispanics continues to widen. The educational disadvantages facing Hispanics occur in every region of the country and across all Hispanic subgroups.

- **Only about half of Hispanic adults are high school graduates.** As of 1991, only 51.3% of Hispanics 25 years old and over had completed four years of high school or more, compared to 80.5% of non-Hispanics. Only 43.6% of Mexican Americans 25 years and over were high school graduates, compared to 58.0% of Puerto Ricans, 61.0% of Cubans, 60.4% of Central and South Americans, and 71.1% of other Hispanics.[1] As of October 1989, about 37.7% of Hispanics aged 18-24 years were high school dropouts, compared to 16.4% of Blacks and 14.1% of Whites.[2] The 1991 report on progress towards the National Education Goals for the year 2000 found that between 1975 and 1990, high school completion rates improved 12 percentage points for Black students and two percentage points for White students, but decreased three percentage points for Hispanic students.[3]

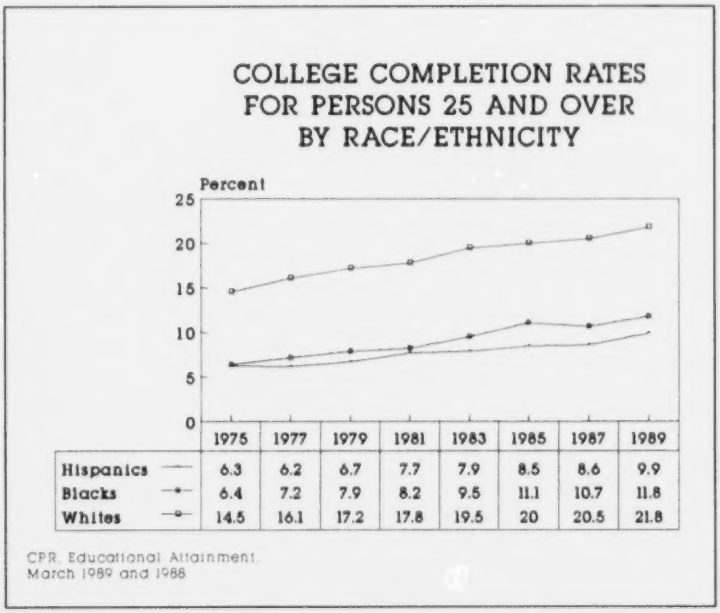
HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES FOR PERSONS 25 AND OVER BY RACE/ETHNICITY



	1975	1977	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989
Hispanics	37.9	39.6	42	44.5	46.2	47.9	50.9	50.9
Blacks	42.5	45.5	49.4	52.9	56.8	59.8	63.4	64.6
Whites	64.5	67	69.7	71.6	73.8	75.5	77	78.4

CPR, Educational Attainment, March 1989 and 1988

- **Less than one in 10 Hispanics graduates from college.** As of 1991, only 9.7% of Hispanics 25 years old and over had completed four or more years of college, compared to 22.3% of non-Hispanics. Only 6.2% of Mexican Americans 25 years and over were college graduates, compared to 10.1% of Puerto Ricans, 18.5% of Cubans, 15.1% of Central and South Americans, and 16.2% of other Hispanics.[4]



	1975	1977	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989
Hispanics	6.3	6.2	6.7	7.7	7.9	8.5	8.6	9.9
Blacks	6.4	7.2	7.9	8.2	9.5	11.1	10.7	11.8
Whites	14.5	16.1	17.2	17.8	19.5	20	20.5	21.8

CPR, Educational Attainment, March 1989 and 1988

- **Hispanic adults are almost eight times as likely as non-Hispanics to be illiterate.** Using the traditional measure of illiteracy -- completion of less than five years of schooling -- as of 1991, 12.5% of Hispanics 25 and older were illiterate, compared to just 1.6% of non-Hispanics. Figures were highest for Mexican Americans, with 15.9% of adults having less than five years of education, compared to 8.9% of Central and South Americans, 8.4% of Puerto Ricans, and 7.7% of Cubans.[5] Studies of functional illiteracy based on tests of reading, writing, and computational skills have found rates as high as 56% for Hispanic adults, compared to 44% for Blacks and 16% for Whites.[6]

Underrepresentation in Education and Training Programs

Many problems faced by Hispanic students can be addressed by a variety of federal initiatives, including Head Start, Chapter 1 (education block grant funds for students from disadvantaged families), and TRIO (Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds). For youth and adults, participation in programs such as Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) employment and training efforts can help Hispanics obtain literacy skills, earn high school equivalency certificates, and obtain additional job-related education. However, these programs serve only a minority of the eligible population, and Hispanics are particularly underrepresented. Hispanics constitute approximately 36% of minority Americans and are more than two and a half times as likely to be poor as non-Hispanics, yet, for example:

- **Despite clear evidence that participation in pre-school programs improves children's educational attainment, Hispanics are far less likely than other pre-schoolers to be enrolled in school.** As of October 1990, 30.7% of Hispanic 3-4 year-olds were enrolled in pre-school programs, compared to 41.8% of Black children and 47.2% of White children. This represents an increase for Hispanics from 22.3% in 1989; between 1975 and 1985, about 27% of Hispanic 3-4 year-olds were typically enrolled in pre-school programs.[7] Hispanics accounted for 22% of Head Start participants during Fiscal Year 1990; 38% were Black and 33% were White.[8]

- **Hispanic participation in the TRIO programs has decreased.** In Fiscal Year 1991, Hispanics constituted only 17% of all TRIO program participants; 41% were Blacks and 35% Whites.[9] In 1978, Hispanics represented 24% of all participants in TRIO programs.

- **Hispanic involvement in JTPA is below what would be required for equitable participation.** Given current funding levels, about 15,000 more Hispanics should be participating in the JTPA system each year. JTPA has done a particularly poor job of serving Hispanic dropouts, whether youth or adults. In program year 1988, for example, Hispanics comprised 21% of the eligible population of youth dropouts, but only 14% of those who successfully completed JTPA services.[10]

Factors Affecting Hispanic Undereducation

The Hispanic educational crisis is greatly affected by Hispanics' social and economic background. Hispanics are a little more than two and half times as likely as non-Hispanics to live in poverty, and are more likely to attend overcrowded, segregated and poorly funded schools with few or no Hispanic or bilingual teachers; be enrolled below grade level; and be placed in non-academic tracks which greatly reduce access to college. Following are some of the factors which contribute to the high dropout rate and discourage college entry:

- **Hispanics are heavily concentrated in urban areas and inner-city schools, which tend to have very limited resources.** Well over 90% of Hispanic students attend urban schools, which suffer from a limited tax base and must address all the special problems of the inner city -- crime, drugs, deteriorating infrastructure, and persistent poverty.

- **Hispanic students have become increasingly segregated during the past decade,** and segregation is most severe in the largest central-city school districts. During the same period, school segregation for Blacks has decreased.[11]

- **Although they place great value upon education, many Hispanic parents lack the resources to help their children in school.** Half of Hispanic parents are functionally illiterate, some have limited English proficiency, and many work several jobs or have no child care available, all of which limit their interaction with teachers and school administrators. Moreover, many schools do little outreach to Hispanic parents.

- **Less than 3% of U.S. elementary and secondary school teachers are Hispanic.** Studies have suggested because that Hispanics often lack positive role models in their communities, and because so many Hispanic parents have limited education, teachers and school administrators play a particularly critical role in informing Hispanic students about educational opportunities and in motivating them to stay in school and aspire to post-secondary education. Yet as of 1988, Hispanics represented just 2.9% of the public school and 2.8% of the private school elementary and secondary school teachers in this country.[12]

- **Hispanics are likely to be held back in school, and early school failure is the greatest predictor of a child's later dropping out of school.** At each level a higher percentage of Hispanic children are enrolled below grade level than White or Black children.[13] Lack of participation in Head Start or developmental day care, large classes, language differences, and lack of needed services contribute to this problem.

- **Hispanics tend to be enrolled in educational "tracks" which prepare students for neither college nor stable employment.** Dropout rates are especially high among youth in general and vocational curricular tracks; even among Hispanics who stay in school until their senior year, 75% are in non-academic tracks which do not offer the courses, especially in math and science, required to enter college.

- **The proposed policy restrictions on minority scholarships have serious negative implications for future access to higher education by Hispanics.** The major factors inhibiting Hispanic enrollment in higher education are the cost of education coupled with the relatively low incomes of Hispanic families. As a result, Hispanics are heavily dependent on federal financial aid. Yet, compared to other groups, Hispanics rely less on grants and more on student loans at larger average loan amounts to finance their education.[14]

Progress

Some progress is being made in the Hispanic educational crisis. SAT scores for Hispanics increased steadily during the 1980s. Educational attainment levels have also increased in absolute terms over the last two decades, although the gap between Hispanic and other groups has widened. And preliminary evaluation data from NCLR's national education demonstration Project EXCEL (**E**xcellence in **C**ommunity **E**ducational **L**eadership) suggest that community-based programs can lead to significant measurable improvements in student performance, as well as great increases in parent and community involvement in the educational process.[15]

The issuance of Executive Order 12729, Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, signed by President Bush on September 24, 1990, suggests an increased federal commitment to improving Hispanic educational status. The President's Advisory Commission mandated by this Order will be preparing a report to the Secretary of Education; its recommendations could lead to positive changes in federal education programs, such as increased targeting and funding, as well as increased commitment by both the federal government and business and industry to develop partnerships with and provide increased funding for education programs run by Hispanic community-based organizations.

Conclusion

Education has tremendous importance in determining future life opportunities -- making possible not only stable, satisfying, well-paid employment, but also full participation in American society. At the same time, the ability of American industry to compete in a world market depends upon the continuing availability of a well educated, well trained workforce capable of learning new skills to meet new job demands. Unless Hispanic educational opportunities and attainment increase significantly, nearly half the Hispanic population will be unprepared for the job market of the 21st century. Given the growth and urban concentration of Hispanic Americans, assuring that Hispanics complete high school and obtain post-secondary training is of great importance to both the Hispanic community and the broader American society.

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POVERTY

Introduction

Three-quarters of Hispanic families have achieved a stable socioeconomic position in American society; on the other hand, one in every four Hispanic families -- and almost two in five Hispanic children -- is poor. For a variety of reasons -- including undereducation, concentration in low-paying jobs, early childbearing, and the impact of the current recession -- the poverty, unemployment, and child poverty rates among Hispanic families are on the rise. Signs of distress, while especially alarming among single mothers and their children, are evident in Hispanic married-couple families as well -- even when both adults work.

Employment, Earnings, and Income

The rapidly growing and diverse U.S. Hispanic community maintains a strong commitment to the labor force and shows signs of economic growth. More Hispanic men than non-Hispanic men are working or looking for work, and recent measures of "buying power" indicate that, over the past decade, Hispanics have increased their aggregate household income. However, Hispanic income remains well below that of non-Hispanics, and Hispanic unemployment higher than that of non-Hispanics.

- **Hispanic men have higher labor force participation rates than non-Hispanic men.** As has been the case for more than a decade, more Hispanic men than non-Hispanic men were working or looking for work in 1991. The labor force participation rate of Hispanic men was 78.2%, compared to 73.9% for non-Hispanic men.[1]

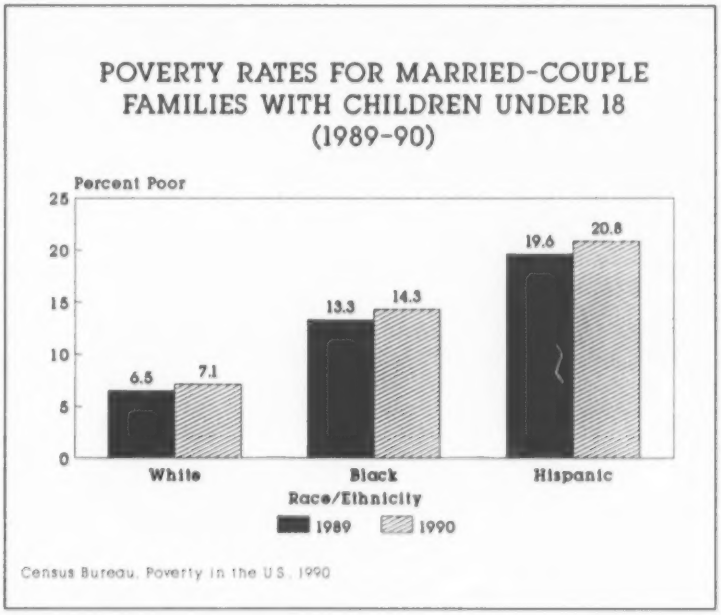
- **Between 1982 and 1990, Hispanic aggregate after-tax income increased by 70%.** At the end of the previous recessionary period, Hispanic after-tax income -- or buying power -- totaled $85 billion. By 1990, aggregate after-tax household income among Hispanic families totaled $144 billion, signaling increases in the Hispanic population as a whole, in their participation in the labor force, and in their movement up the economic ladder.[2]

- **In 1990, the median earnings of Hispanics continued to be lower than for non-Hispanics.** High labor force participation rates did not translate into socioeconomic equity for all Hispanic families. Because of a greater concentration in service and blue-collar jobs, the median earnings of Hispanic men were less than two-thirds the median earnings of non-Hispanic men in the U.S. in 1990 ($14,141 versus $22,207). Similarly, the median earnings of Hispanic women were less than those of non-Hispanic women ($10,099 compared to $12,438).[3]

- **Between 1990 and 1991, the unemployment rate among Hispanic men rose; unemployment among Hispanic men was considerably higher than that for non-Hispanic men.** The effects of the current recession were experienced by all segments of the population but, for the majority of Hispanic workers, concentrated in low-wage jobs vulnerable to economic changes, the recession pushed already-fragile families further into poverty. Hispanic male unemployment rose to 10.6%, up from 8.0% in 1990; the non-Hispanic male unemployment rate went from 5.7% to 7.8% during the same period.[4]

- **Hispanic households experienced a decline in real income between 1989 and 1990 that was greater than the decline experienced by White or Black households during the same period.** Median household income declined in real terms by 2.6% for White families (from $37,919 to $36,915); by 2.0% for Black families (from $19,060 to $18,676); and by 3.4% for Hispanic families (from $24,713 to $23,431) between 1989 and 1990.[5]

- **Hispanic married-couple families continue to face economic hardship despite their attachment to the labor force.** Hispanic married-couple families with children have higher poverty rates than similar Black or White families; in 1990, 20.8% of such Hispanic families were poor, compared to 14.3% of married-couple Black families, and 7.1% of such White families. While the income disparity between White and Black married-couple families has lessened, the gap between White and Hispanic married-couple families has widened. Hispanic married-couple family income was 69% of White married-couple family income in 1990, down from 76% of White married-couple family income in 1981.[6]



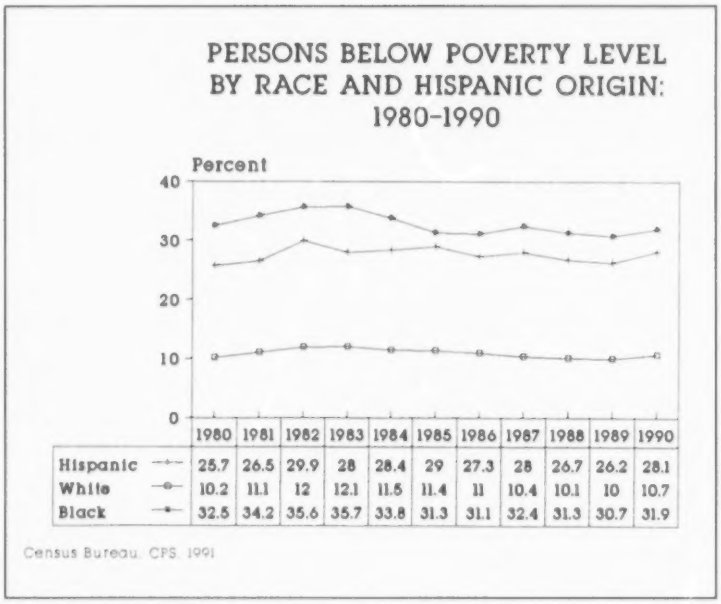
Children and Families

One-quarter of Hispanic families (25.0%) live in poverty, as do 28.1% of Hispanic individuals, reflecting an increase in the poverty rate between 1989 and 1990. Rates vary by age and nationality group:

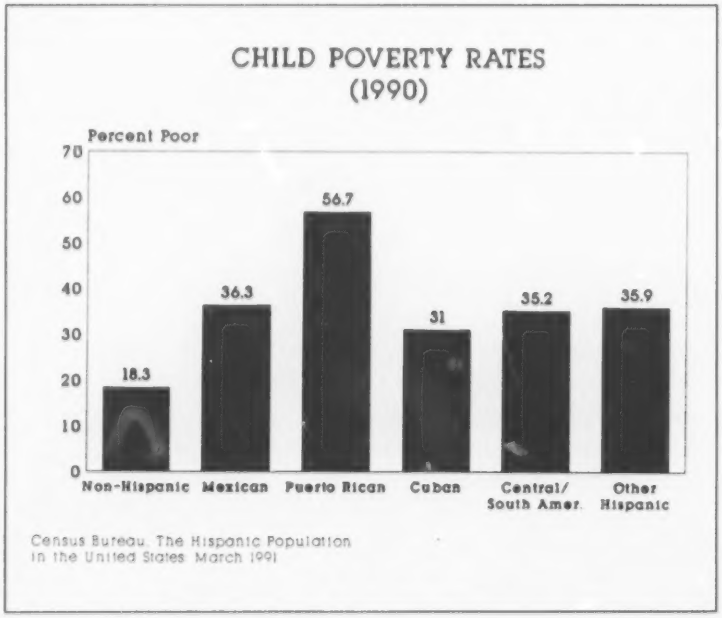
- **Poverty rates are highest among Puerto Rican families and lowest among Cuban families.** The poverty rate for Puerto Rican families in 1990 was 37.5%, compared to 25.0% for Mexican American, 22.2% for Central and South American, and 13.8% for Cuban American families; 9.5% of non-Hispanic families were poor.[7]

- **Almost half (48.3%) of female-headed Hispanic families were poor in 1990,** compared to 31.7% of comparable non-Hispanic families.[8]

- **The educational level of the head of household also affects poverty levels.** In 1990, 35.7% of families whose householder was not a high school graduate were poor.[9]



- **Poverty rates are lower among older families, but elderly Hispanics have much higher poverty rates than non-Hispanic elderly.** In 1990, 17.0% of Hispanic families with a head of household 65 or older was poor, compared to 5.9% of comparable non-Hispanic families.[10] This is partly because only 80% of Hispanic elderly receive Social Security, compared to 93% of White and 88% of Black Elderly,[11] and only 44% of the Hispanics eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) actually receive it.[12]



Poverty among Hispanic children is increasing, among the working poor as well as the unemployed.

- **Even with an adult working full-time, year-**

round, Hispanic children in the U.S. are three times more likely to be poor than children in comparable non-Hispanic families. Currently, more than one in three Hispanic children (38.4%) are poor, compared to less than one in five non-Hispanic children (18.3%). Between 1979 and 1989, more than one million Hispanic children were added to the numbers living in poverty, despite the fact that they often lived with both parents and had at least one employed parent.[13]

- **Births to Hispanic teenagers are on the rise, with significant consequences for the health, education, stability, and socioeconomic status of Hispanic families.** In 1988, approximately 78,000 babies were born to Hispanic women under 20; in 1989, the number of births to young Hispanic women had increased by almost 14% to 88,880 (in 47 reporting states). These births contribute to health problems for both the babies and their mothers, mothers dropping out of high school, single-parent families, and extremely high poverty rates.[14]

Factors Associated With Increasing Poverty

Many factors contribute to growing rates of poverty among Hispanic children and families. For example:

- **Concentration in low-wage work.** Almost three-quarters of all Hispanic men are concentrated in service, production, and laborer occupations, compared to slightly more than half of non-Hispanic men (73.5% versus 51.4%). More than three-quarters of employed Hispanic men (76.7%) earned less than $25,000 in 1990, compared to more than half of non-Hispanic men (54.5%).[15] Well over three-fifths (63.6%) of Hispanic families living in poverty in 1989 had at least one family member who was working, compared to half (51.8%) of poor Black families.[16] Moreover, Hispanic workers are overrepresented in industries with declining employment, and have the highest rate of worker displacement of any population group.[17]

- **Undereducation.** Only about half of Hispanics are high school graduates, less than one in ten is a college graduate, and one in eight has less than five years of schooling. Yet according to *Workforce 2000,* about 30% of the new jobs created in the last 15 years of the 20th century will require at least college graduation, and another 22% will require some college. Only 14% of new jobs will require less than a high school education.[18]

- **More single-parent families.** In 1990, one-third (33.0%) of all Hispanic families were headed by a single parent, the great majority (29.0%) maintained by a woman. Comparable figures for single-parent families are 60.0% for Blacks and 23.0% for Whites. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of Hispanic single-parent families increased at a rate greater than that of White or Black single-parent families. The number of Hispanic single parents increased an average of 7.0% per year from 1980 to 1990, compared with 3.1% for Whites and 3.8% for Blacks.[19] Among Hispanic subgroups, poverty rates are highest among Puerto Rican families, which also have

the highest proportion of families maintained by women; in 1990, almost two-thirds (64.4%) of female-headed Puerto Rican families lived in poverty.[20]

- **Discrimination.** Lack of equal educational opportunity keeps many Hispanics from obtaining the skills needed to qualify for jobs offering stable, well-paid employment, and employment discrimination further limits job opportunities. Empirical evidence indicates that Hispanics experience significant levels of employment discrimination, that discrimination has increased as a result of the employer sanctions provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), and that the federal agency most responsible for addressing employment discrimination -- the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission -- has given minimal attention to discrimination against Hispanics.[21]

- **Inadequate national attention and commitment.** In spite of the current economic picture -- including the increases in poverty, unemployment, Food Stamp and AFDC recipients -- few policies or focused attention aim at helping working families and poor children. Only recently was an extension of unemployment insurance benefits approved for jobless workers who had exhausted their compensation.[22] And, while changes in Food Stamp legislation have been approved, no funds have been committed to implement the proposed increases for children and families.[23]

Conclusion

While Hispanics have made economic progress over the past decade, they remain far more likely than non-Hispanics to live in poverty. One aspect of Hispanic poverty is somewhat different from poverty among other population groups; Hispanics are more likely than other Americans to be among the working poor. Poverty rates among Hispanic children, especially those living in the growing number of female-headed families, are high and growing. In the absence of effective policies and programs directed at especially vulnerable groups such as children, female-headed households, and the working poor, Hispanic poverty rates may well continue to increase.

* See the Civil Rights section of this report for specific information on the performance of enforcement agencies in protecting Hispanic civil rights.

Endnotes

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HEALTH

Introduction

The socioeconomic disparity between Hispanics and other Americans is reflected in the health status of Hispanics. Unfortunately, due to serious data limitations -- many health-related data are not separately collected or are not tabulated for Hispanics, and what is available is often outdated or not representative of the total Hispanic population -- only a partial understanding of the health status of Hispanics is available. However, existing data indicate that compared to other Americans, Hispanics are more likely to contract certain diseases, receive less preventive care, and have less access to health education or health care.

Hispanic Health Status

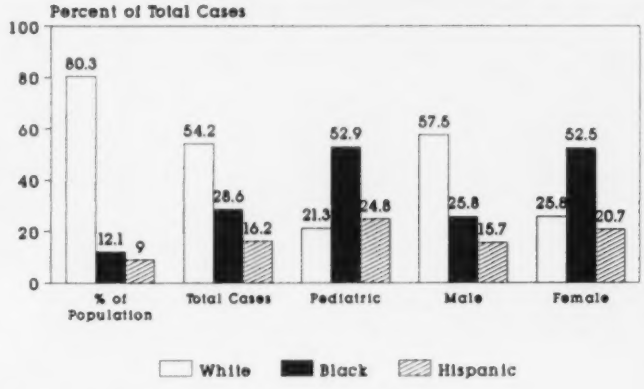
Hispanics are more likely than other Americans to contract certain diseases and are disproportionately affected by AIDS and substance abuse.

- **Existing data clearly indicate that Hispanics suffer from excess incidence of certain cancers -- stomach, esophagus, pancreas, and cervix.** Death due to stomach cancer is twice as high for Hispanics as for non-Hispanic Whites, and the incidence of cervical cancer among Hispanic women is double that for non-Hispanic White women. The incidence of lung cancer is increasing, due to increased cigarette smoking.[1]

- **Hispanic are at high risk for other diseases, such as tuberculosis and diabetes.** The incidence of tuberculosis among Hispanics is four times that of non-Hispanic Whites, and the recent rise in the incidence of measles is becoming an increasingly serious concern. Hispanics have three times the risk of diabetes, and diabetes among Hispanics is of greater metabolic severity than in non-Hispanic Whites.[2] Obesity, a condition which increases the risk of chronic disease, is more prevalent among Hispanics than non-Hispanic Whites. Hypertension, however, is much lower among Hispanics than among non-Hispanic Blacks and Whites.[3]

- **Hispanics have twice the percentage of AIDS cases which would be expected given their percentage of the population — and three times the percentage of female and pediatric AIDS cases.** As of November 1991, it is estimated that Hispanics, who comprised 9% of the population, accounted for 16% of all AIDS cases in the U.S. -- including 16% of all AIDS cases among men, 21% of AIDS cases among women, and 25% of all pediatric AIDS cases. The link between HIV/AIDS and drug abuse is particularly strong for Hispanics. Nearly half (46%) of all Hispanic AIDS cases involved intravenous drug use, compared to just 15% of White cases. More than five-sixths (87%) of Hispanic children with AIDS appear to have contacted the AIDS virus from an infected mother, compared to less than five-eighths (62%) of White children. Hispanic pediatric cases were much more traceable to intravenous (IV) drug use: 71% of pediatric AIDS cases were drug-related (43% due to the mother's IV drug use and 28% through the drug use of the mother's sexual partner), compared to 60% of Black and 42% of White cases.[4]

- **Hispanics are less likely than Whites or Blacks to report ever having tried illicit drugs, but use of certain "hard" drugs is increasing.** According to the 1991 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, some 31% of Hispanics had "ever used" any kind of illicit drug, compared to 39% of Blacks and 38% of Whites. Hispanic women were less likely to use illicit drugs (25%) than Hispanic men (37%), and also less likely than Black (33%) or White (35%) women. Overall use of drugs by Hispanics, as with other Americans, appears to be decreasing, yet use of crack and other kinds of cocaine appears to be increasing. The percentage of Hispanics reporting use of any illicit drug at least once in the past year decreased from 17% in 1985 to 12% in 1991; however, the percentage of Hispanics reporting ever having used cocaine increased from 7% to 11%.[5] Moreover, the report, based on self-report through a household survey, may well understate actual drug use.



CDC HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, December 1991

- **The leading causes of death for Hispanics reflect important differences be-**

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH FOR HISPANICS AND WHITE NON-HISPANICS, 1987

HISPANICS	%	RANK	WHITE NON-HISPANICS	%
Heart disease	25	1	Heart disease	37
Cancer	17	2	Cancer	23
Injuries	9	3	Stroke	7
Stroke	6	4	Chronic lung disease	4
Homicide	5	5	Injuries	4
Liver disease	3	6	Pneumonia/Influenza	4
Pneumonia/ Influenza	3	7	Diabetes	2
Diabetes	3	8	Suicide	2
HIV infection	3	9	Atherosclerosis	1
Perinatal conditions	3	10	Liver disease	1

Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Supplement September 26, 1989

tween their health experience and that of the general population. While heart disease and cancer were the first and second leading causes of death for both Hispanics and non-Hispanics in 1987, the rates were lower for Hispanics. Unintentional injuries and chronic liver disease ranked higher for Hispanics; suicide, stroke and pulmonary disease ranked lower. Homicide, AIDS, and perinatal conditions were among the top 10 killers of Hispanics, whereas none of these conditions was among the major killers of non-Hispanic Whites.[6]

- **Migrant and seasonal farmworkers face special health problems.** Hispanics comprise the majority of the migrant and seasonal farmworker population in United States. The infant mortality rate for farmworkers is about 25% higher than the national average; their life expectancy is 49 years, compared to 75 years for the total population; and the rate of parasitic infection among some groups of farmworkers approaches 50 times that of the total population.[7] Farmworkers are continuously exposed to toxic pesticides. They live near fields which are heavily sprayed; pesticides are likely to be in the irrigation water which many farmworkers must use for bathing and drinking, due to substandard living conditions. Toxic exposure starts at a very young age, since children comprise a significant portion of the workforce, and often infants are taken to the fields by their parents. The health care needs of this population are particularly challenging because of their migratory existence, low incomes, poor education, and lack of health insurance.

Access to Health Care

Hispanics have less access to preventive and primary health care than other Americans. For example:

- **Like Black Americans, Hispanics receive less preventive health care, including prenatal care, than the majority population.** According to data gathered between 1982 and 1984 through the one-time Hispanic Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (HHANES), Hispanics were almost twice as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to indicate that they did not have a regular source of health care. Twice as many Hispanics as non-Hispanic Whites reported using hospital emergency rooms as their main source of primary care.[8] Utilization of physician services reflects both access to care and health status; after adjusting for health status, the physician utilization rate for Hispanics (4.8 physician visits per person) was lower than for either Whites (6.5) or Blacks (5.6) during the period 1985-1988.[9]

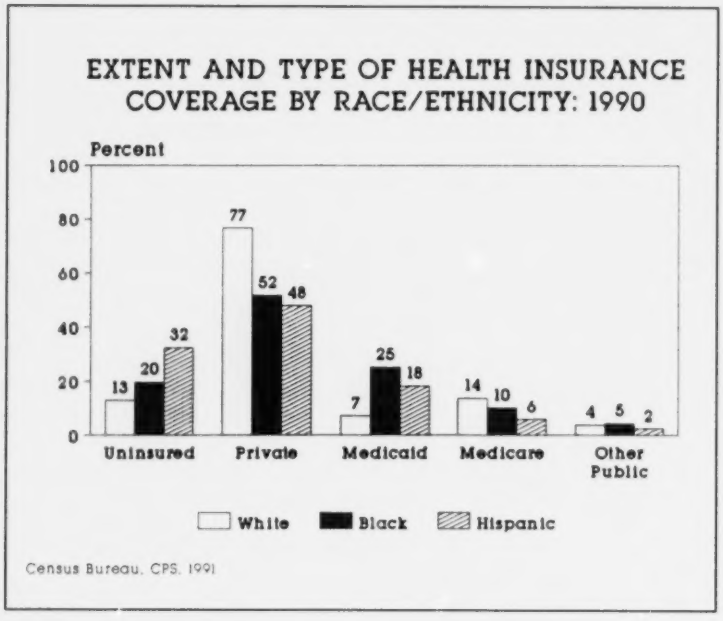
- **Hispanic women are far more likely than White women to receive prenatal care late or not at all.** In 1989, 56.7% of Mexican American mothers, 60.8% of Central and South American mothers, and 62.7% of Puerto Rican mothers received prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, compared to 82.7% of White mothers and 59.9% of Black mothers. While 1.1% of White mothers received no prenatal care, the percentages were 4.9% of Mexican American, 4.8% of Puerto Rican, 4.2% of Central and South American, and 5.2% of Black mothers. Despite the lower rates of prenatal care, the percentage of low birth-weight Mexican American babies (5.6%) and Central

and South American babies (5.8%) was similar to that of White babies (5.7%); the rate was much higher for Puerto Rican mothers (9.5%). Infant mortality was lower among Mexican Americans (7.9 deaths per 1,000 live births), than among White mothers (8.1). However, Puerto Rican and other Hispanics had an infant mortality rate (9.6) higher than Whites, but well below Blacks (18.6).[10]

Factors Limiting Access to Health Care

Barriers to health care for Hispanics are cultural, linguistic, geographical, and economic.

- **As a group, Hispanics are far more likely to be uninsured than other Americans.** Data from the 1990 Current Population Survey (CPS) indicate that 32% of Hispanics -- compared to 13% of Whites and 20% of Blacks -- lack health insurance. This is true regardless of whether there is an adult worker in the family. A history of employment in the service and manufacturing industries -- sectors where, in addition to low wages, there has been a traditional absence of health care benefits -- has served to deny Hispanics access to comprehensive and preventive health care. Thus, despite their lower incomes, Hispanic Americans spend proportionally more of their disposable income on health care than other Americans.[11] In 1988, Mexican Americans, who make up more than 60% of the Hispanic population, were the most likely to be uninsured: 37% of Mexican Americans, 20% of Cubans, and 16% of Puerto Ricans had no health insurance. Cubans -- with the most education and highest incomes -- were the most likely to have private insurance, while Puerto Ricans -- with the lowest incomes and highest unemployment rates -- were most likely to be Medicaid recipients.[12]



- **A major problem for Hispanics is the limited coverage through Medicaid, which is available to unemployed people, but not the working poor.** A recent NCLR

focus group study of Mexican American single mothers in four communities in the Southwest and Midwest found that the need for health care was a major cause for their being on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Many reported having to quit their jobs and go on welfare in order to obtain Medicaid when their children became ill.

- **Also negatively affecting health care quality and access for Hispanics is the fact that few health professionals and paraprofessionals speak Spanish -- and even fewer are Hispanic.** Hispanics are seriously underrepresented in the health occupations, particularly those requiring higher levels of formal education and training. Although Hispanics represented 9.0% of the U.S. population in 1990, less than 5% of all U.S. physicians and students in medical schools were Hispanic. The proportion of Hispanics in other health-related fields -- dentists, registered nurses, pharmacists and therapists -- was even lower, between 2.5% and 3.5%.[13] Research shows that Hispanics need prevention and primary care services but are reluctant to use them because of barriers related to language and culture. For example, Hispanics who do not speak English are less likely to have a regular source of medical care than those who are English speakers. Moreover, culturally sensitive health promotion materials are severely lacking.[14]

- **Serious barriers to Hispanic access to health care include the shortage of physicians and primary care facilities serving Hispanic communities,** according to a 1991 General Accounting Office (GAO) report. For example, in El Paso, Texas, only 30 of 800 physicians (4%) practice in the poorest part of the city, an area that houses 170,000 people (32% of the city's population), and there are only two federally funded community health centers to serve the entire county.[15] In a recent study of community health centers in the seven states with the largest Hispanic populations, three-quarters of the health centers visited reported that the demand for services far surpassed the available resources.[16] A shortage of primary care facilities results in patients going to community health centers or hospital emergency rooms in advanced stages of illness, making treatment more difficult and more costly.

Conclusion

Poor health status and a lack of access to regular, high quality health care are major problems for Hispanics. These difficulties stem from many factors, including poverty, language and cultural barriers, lack of health insurance, and lack of Hispanic health professionals, coupled with inadequate allocation of resources to Hispanic health services nationwide. The current crisis in health care has made Hispanics even more vulnerable than other populations. Major improvements in Hispanic health status are unlikely without substantial changes in programs and policies to increase the availability of geographically, economically, and culturally accessible health care.

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CIVIL RIGHTS

Introduction

Hispanics are a protected class under federal civil rights legislation based on national origin. However, Hispanics are far less likely than other protected classes to file complaints alleging discrimination, and federal enforcement bodies have typically given very limited attention to assuring that Hispanic Americans know their rights or enabling and assisting Hispanic victims of discrimination to file complaints. Available research -- although less extensive than the comparable body of data on other protected classes -- indicates that Hispanics suffer from high levels of discrimination in employment, education, and housing. They also suffer from negative public perceptions and media images, which further encourage discrimination.

Public Attitudes

Recent polling information confirms that the majority of Americans harbor negative attitudes toward Hispanics.

- In a 1990 study by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), which examined public opinions and perceptions of six major American cultural groups -- Whites, Jews, Blacks, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Southern Whites -- Hispanics were rated last on three and next to last on the other three of the six characteristics measured (wealth, work ethic, violence, intelligence, dependency, and patriotism). Over 80% of those surveyed rated Hispanics, together with Blacks, lower than Whites on one or more of the six characteristics.[1]
- In a 1989 NORC survey focusing on the social standing of 58 ethnic groups, Hispanic groups including Mexicans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans ranked 49th or lower.[2]

Evidence of Discrimination

There is increasing evidence of discrimination against Hispanics in employment, education, and housing.

Employment

- A 1989 Urban Institute study, based on 360 "hiring audits" conducted in San Diego and Chicago, found evidence of significant levels of national origin discrimination in employment. The hiring audit technique used pairs of Hispanic and Anglo (White non-Hispanic) job applicants that were as closely matched as possible with regard to characteristics that were likely to legitimately affect the hiring decision. The study found that the Anglo applicants received 33% more interviews and 52% more job offers than the Hispanic applicants. It also found that 31% of the Hispanic applicants encountered unfavorable treatment in the hiring process, compared to 11% of the Anglo applicants.[3]

- Analysis of the results of three studies of the disparity in earnings and income among Hispanics and Anglos conducted between 1982 to 1990 reveals remarkably consistent findings:
  - The percentage of the income gap between Hispanic males and Anglo males which is attributable to employment discrimination falls within a 10%-18% range; and
  - The percentage of the Hispanic female-Anglo male income gap attributable to employment discrimination falls within a 30%-40% range.

  The findings indicate that, although Hispanics have made economic progress, inequality due to discrimination in the labor market remains a significant obstacle for many Hispanics.[4]
- NCLR conservatively estimates that the cost to the Hispanic community attributable to employment discrimination is $11.7 billion in lost income annually.[5]
- Considerable employment discrimination has resulted from the implementation of employer sanctions provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). IRCA imposes civil and criminal penalties on employers who knowingly hire or continue to employ individuals who are not legally authorized to work in the United States. According to a 1990 study by the General Accounting Office (GAO), involving a survey of 4,362 employers, an estimated 10% of employers reported discrimination against employees or job applicants solely on the basis of national origin characteristics; an estimated 5% had begun a practice of refusing to hire persons based on "foreign" appearance or speech accent; and an estimated 8% required only "foreign-looking" and "foreign-sounding" person to comply with IRCA's employment verification requirements -- all in clear violation of the law.[6]

Education

- Recently released major findings of a study commissioned by the National School Boards Association indicate that 80% of Hispanic students in the South and Northeast, 71% in the West, and 52% in the Midwest attend schools that are predominantly minority. These findings of *de facto* segregation, resulting from the isolation of Hispanics in low-income areas in major cities, indicate that Hispanics are now far more likely than Blacks to attend segregated schools within big-city school systems.[7]
- In a July 1991 report assessing the extent of within-school discrimination and the adequacy of federal government efforts to eliminate it, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) found that many of the nation's schools use discriminatory student assignment practices such as ability grouping by block scheduling in elementary school and curriculum tracking in secondary schools. The GAO report also notes that, according to data from the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR), many of the nation's school districts use student assignment practices that result in the disproportionate assignment of minority students to special education classes and the "excessive isolation" of minority students from White students.[8]

Housing

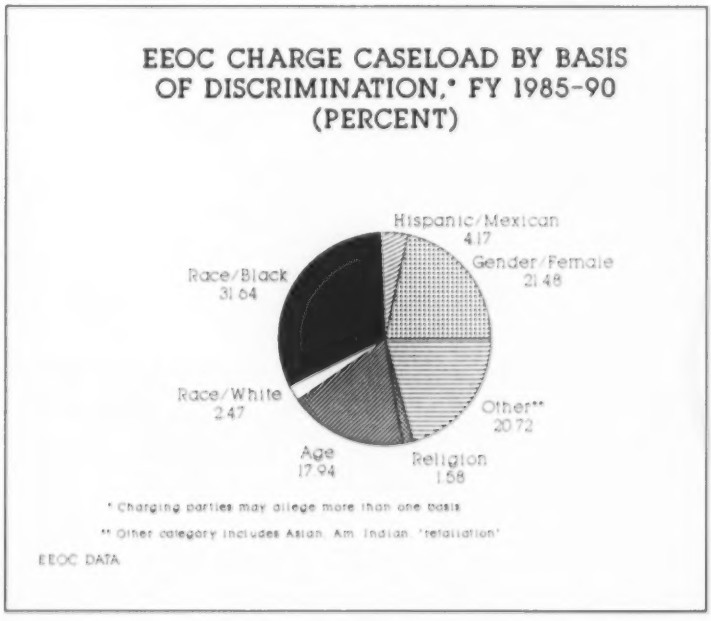
- A 1991 report issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that Hispanic homeseekers, both buyers and renters, experienced discriminatory treatment by sale or rental agents in at least 50% of their encounters. The HUD Housing Discrimination Study found that the estimated overall incidence of discrimination was 50% for Hispanic renters and 56% for Hispanic homebuyers.[9]

Federal Enforcement Activities

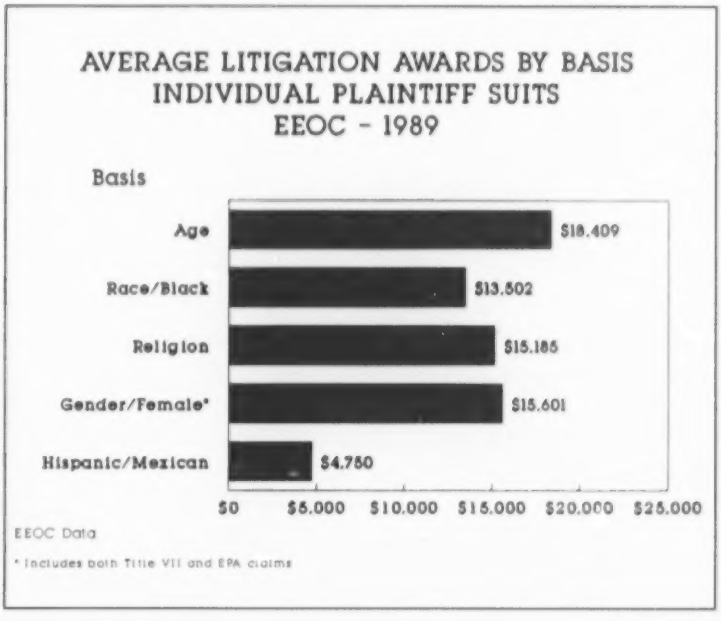
Analysis of the enforcement activities targeted to Hispanics and conducted by the federal agencies responsible for upholding minority civil rights clearly indicates that Hispanic civil rights continue to receive low priority.

Employment

- More than eight years since an internal study found that it severely underserves Hispanics, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) continues to fail to equitably serve Hispanics in the enforcement of equal employment opportunity laws.
  - Hispanic charges alleging discrimination based on national origin account for only 4.2% of the EEOC's combined charge caseload for the six-year period Fiscal Year (FY) 1985 through FY 1990. By comparison, charges alleging discrimination based on race (Black), gender (female), and age, respectively, made up 31.6%, 21.5% and 17.9% of the total charge caseload.



- In FY 1985, 45% of all Hispanic charges closed by the EEOC included no remedy for the charging party. By 1990, that amount had climbed to 73% of all Hispanic charge closures. While non-Hispanic no-remedy closures also increased significantly, they were always lower than Hispanic no-remedy closures.
- For the six-year period FY 1985 through FY 1990, lawsuits including a charge of national origin (Hispanic) discrimination were only 2.15% of the total number of lawsuits, by basis, filed by the EEOC. Lawsuits including charges of discrimination based on sex (female), age, and race (Black) made up 29.39%, 23.27%, and 16.92%, respectively, of the total EEOC lawsuits filed, by basis.
- Hispanics continue to receive significantly smaller average monetary awards in lawsuits litigated by the EEOC on their behalf. In 1989, in EEOC lawsuits involving a single plaintiff/beneficiary, Hispanics received an average of $4,750, compared to average awards of $18,409 for suits alleging age discrimination, $13,502 for suits based on racial (Black) discrimination, and $15,601 for suits involving gender (female) discrimination.[10]



Education

- In its July 1991 report on within-school discrimination, the GAO found that OCR's enforcement efforts regarding within-school discrimination have been inadequate. Specific problems with OCR's enforcement activities in this area include the following:
  - A substantial decrease in OCR-initiated compliance reviews relating to within-school discrimination during the period FY 1983 through FY 1990;
  - Lack of federal regulations and policy guidance on the subject for use by OCR investigative staff and state/local agencies, leading to inconsistent investigations and confusion concerning acceptable assignment practices;

- Delayed or incomplete monitoring of school corrective action plans, resulting in the persistence of within-school discrimination practices; and
- Lack of appropriate staff training and expertise for investigative staff regarding assignment practices that violate Title VI, as well as identifying less discriminatory alternative methods of assigning students based on academic ability or achievement.[11]

◆ OCR also has a history of poor service to Hispanics and lack of attention to educational problems specific to Hispanics. As part of its new National Enforcement Strategy, OCR announced that it will focus on a number of "high priority" elementary and secondary educational equity issues of interest to Hispanics, including equal educational opportunities for national origin minorities who are limited-English-proficient and ability grouping that results in segregation on the basis of race or national origin. Unfortunately, OCR's three "high priority" educational equity issues for postsecondary education deal exclusively with either race or gender, and exclude national origin discrimination.[12]

Housing

◆ Despite evidence of pervasive housing discrimination against Hispanics, HUD data reveal that Hispanics tend to file very few complaints. According to HUD data:

- From FY 1980 through part of FY 1985, formal complaints from Blacks alleging discrimination totaled 14,172, while such complaints from Hispanics totaled 1,328 -- a ratio of about 11:1 at a time when the Black population was up to 67% larger than the Hispanic population.[13]
- This pattern was consistent over the six-year period; the ratio of Black-to-Hispanic complaints exceeded 10:1 in every year except FY 1983, when it was 9.4:1. Moreover, since that time, numbers of complaints in both groups have increased, but the ratio has remained essentially the same, although the Black population is now only about one-third larger than the Hispanic population.[14]
- Complaints from Hispanics as a percentage of total complaints ranged from 5.4% to 7.2%, and exceeded 7% in only one year. These percentages, too, have changed little since 1985.[15]

◆ Neither HUD or state or local fair housing entities have provided active outreach or services to Hispanics. Very few HUD fair housing grants have gone to groups emphasizing services to the Hispanic community, and only in 1990 did HUD begin its first fair housing initiative focusing on Hispanics. Little outreach is done in Spanish, either to inform people about what constitutes housing discrimination or to educate them about how to file a complaint.

Conclusion

Hispanics face a high level of civil rights discrimination and receive a low level of attention and focus from federal civil rights enforcement agencies. In certain areas, such as school desegregation and employment discrimination, the situation for Hispanics is worsening. To fulfill the promise of equal opportunity for Hispanics in all aspects of life, the performance of civil rights enforcement agencies must improve, and public images toward and of Hispanics must change.

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Reducing inequality between Hispanics and the rest of U.S. society is not simply a moral preference, it is a social and economic imperative. Over the next decade, Hispanics will constitute about one-third of labor force growth, and an increasing proportion of the taxpayers supporting Social Security, Medicare, and other transfer payments needed to support an aging society. Thus, improving the economic standing of the Hispanic population serves the interests of all Americans.

Narrowing the economic gap between Hispanics and other Americans will require immediate, sustained policy intervention and substantial public investment. There is now considerable agreement on the need to increase public investments in both physical infrastructure and human capital development programs. There is a clear and growing consensus in support of converting the "peace dividend" into needed investments in early childhood development, education reform, improved job training, and universal health care coverage programs.

However, because many human capital development programs fail to adequately serve Hispanics, greater domestic investments alone will not necessarily address Hispanic needs. Hispanics are not served in numbers equal to their proportion of the eligible population in early childhood intervention and pre-school programs and higher education programs. Other programs, such as Medicaid, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), fail to consider the unique demographic and cultural characteristics of the Hispanic community; as a result, eligible Hispanics remain unenrolled or are denied equitable levels of benefits. In still other programs, such as the Job Training Partnership Act, Hispanics are both underrepresented in quantitative terms and poorly served in qualitative terms. Literally from the cradle to the grave, Hispanics are frequently denied the level and quality of services and benefits enjoyed by other Americans. Thus, increased public investments must be accompanied by a commitment to equitably serve the Hispanic community.

Policies that make work more rewarding are essential to the improvement of the economic conditions of Hispanics. The vast majority of the Hispanic poverty population consists of the "working poor" and their families. For Hispanics, perhaps the most troubling development over the 1980s was the growth and persistence of poverty, even as labor force participation among Hispanic males was the highest of any group and labor force participation by Hispanic females was increasing. While this phenomenon is partly explained by structural changes in the economy that have resulted in a growing proportion of low-wage, dead-end jobs, Hispanics' reduced after-tax earnings are also partially attributable to public policies -- including higher, regressive federal payroll and state and local taxes -- which diminish the value of work. Reversing this trend would not only reduce poverty among Hispanics and others concentrated in low-wage jobs, but would also have the salutary effect of increasing incentives to work, thereby cutting government transfer payment and social welfare costs.

The economic condition of Hispanics is closely related to the performance of the national economy. Economic growth is necessary to ensure the creation of jobs. A sound economy would also help establish the revenue base and favorable political climate needed to ensure increased domestic investment and vigorous anti-discrimination measures. But greater attention to the quality of jobs is also needed at a time of rapid economic change. The long-term decline of manufacturing employment and the concomitant growth of the service sector has had particularly severe negative effects on Hispanics. Because Hispanic workers are concentrated

in industries with declining employment, they have rates of worker displacement that are higher than those of any other population group. Moreover, many of the service-sector jobs that are available require high levels of education and skills, or offer low wages and few benefits -- or both. Improving the economic condition of Hispanics will thus require not only sustained economic growth, but also policies that lead to the creation of greater numbers of jobs offering adequate wages and benefits.

Improved economic policies and increased domestic investment cannot fully achieve equality for Hispanics in the face of pervasive, persistent discrimination and growing racial and ethnic intolerance. The data clearly demonstrate that Hispanics continue to face substantial discrimination in education, housing and employment; yet federal civil rights enforcement agencies have virtually ignored the Hispanic community. The fact that Hispanics have not benefitted substantially from anti-discrimination protections, however, has not shielded the community from the public "backlash" against alleged "racial preferences." In addition to the more generalized growth of racial and ethnic intolerance, Hispanics are also the targets of highly visible political candidates such as David Duke, and well-financed hate groups which advocate English-only laws and extreme and racist immigration policies. In a negative public climate, ensuring effective and vigorous enforcement of the civil rights laws presents a major challenge for policy makers and the society as a whole.

Progress toward achievement of equality for Hispanics will also require considerable self-help efforts by the Hispanic community. Clearly, public policy interventions that benefit Hispanics will occur only through substantial advocacy by the Hispanic community and Hispanic organizations. Similarly, some of the social and economic problems faced by Hispanics are not easily amenable to policy intervention. The National Council of La Raza recognizes that Hispanics must take substantial responsibility for positive action to alleviate poverty and discrimination in their own community. Particular attention needs to be paid to three critical challenges:

- **The need to engage in careful, pragmatic and disciplined analysis of various policy options to assess their impact on the Hispanic community.** Public policy debates frequently revolve around ideological, rather than empirical, issues. On the one hand, liberal-supported programs and policies which purport to serve "low-income people" or "minorities" are sometimes incorrectly assumed to benefit Hispanics. On the other hand, the strong work ethic and family values that characterize the Hispanic community are often used by conservatives to rationalize governmental indifference. Conventional liberal-conservative paradigms do not fully capture the unique conditions, values, and characteristics of the Hispanic community. It is therefore incumbent on policy makers and the Hispanic community itself to ensure that public policies are designed and monitored to ensure that they equitably serve Hispanics.

- **The need for leadership in promoting personal responsibility and self-help efforts by Hispanics as one part of a strategy to overcome economic and social distress.** Part of the economic disadvantage facing Hispanics results from certain behavioral trends, e.g., high and growing rates of teenage pregnancy and substance abuse. These behaviors are associated with and at least partially caused by underlying factors such as undereducation, poverty, and discrimination, but there is little prospect that such underlying factors can be eliminated in the short term. Hispanics therefore

need to be particularly aggressive in promoting positive role models, media portrayals, interventions, and messages that draw on the community's traditional strengths -- including a strong work ethic, patriotism, and family values -- to encourage more constructive social behavior, especially among Hispanic youth.

- **The need to broaden the public policy agenda of the Hispanic community.** Hispanic organizations and other civil rights groups have traditionally focused their advocacy efforts exclusively or primarily on issues directly related to civil rights and anti-poverty programs. While this analysis clearly demonstrates the need for continuing attention to anti-discrimination and social programs, it is equally clear that broader economic issues, including tax and trade policy, have important effects on the Hispanic community. Clearly, increased attention by Hispanics to macro-economic policy issues is necessary to ensure that policy makers take Hispanics' interests into account in the formulation of issues outside the traditional agendas of minority organizations.

During the 1980s, the Hispanic population experienced rapid growth but continuing economic hardship. The challenge for the 1990s is to find new ways to address old problems, and to enlist the support of both the Hispanic community and the broader American society to work towards true equality of opportunity for Hispanic Americans.

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Notre Dame, IN

R.P. (Bob) Sanchez, J.D.
Flores, Sanchez, Vidaurri & Munoz
Attorneys at Law
McAllen, TX

Mitchell Sviridoff
APCO Associates
New York, NY

Gilbert Vasquez, C.P.A.
Executive Director
Vasquez and Company
Los Angeles, CA

LEGAL COUNSEL

Christopher Lipsett, Esq.
Attorney
Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering
Washington, D.C.